

FINALIST IN THE NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR CATEGORY

Dr George Rice



The University of Nottingham

George Rice joined the Technology Transfer team in 2008. His technology/knowledge transfer initiatives are resulting in step-change improvements in the commercialisation of individual technologies and general

engagement of a wide range of stakeholders with the university's knowledge transfer agenda.

Knowledge transfer

The University of Nottingham *Technology Demonstrator* is a unique initiative aimed at enhancing interaction with university developed technologies to a wide range of stakeholders. Interaction with technology prototypes significantly enhances the quality and effectiveness of knowledge transfer. George has worked closely with the engineering and physical sciences research base to pull together a wide range of exhibits that represent some state-of-the-art inventions and innovations. Each exhibit underpins compelling stories of invention from "eureka", to mature technologies that are already having impact on society.

The Technology Demonstrator supports a programme of activity that drives engagement with technologies for a number of outcomes. For example, business engagement events place local SMEs in contact with new technologies looking for development partners. Visiting organisations can meet university colleagues within the unique interactive environment, young people and public groups can understand how university research has impact on their lives and internal university staff can gain more awareness of the benefits of knowledge transfer.

Crucially, the Technology Demonstrator provides the information in an engaging way, using storytelling and demonstration to expose visitors to a range of opportunities when they might normally have only seen the output from a single research lab. Highlights include more than 110 visiting organisations over 9 months, new R&D relationships, commercialisation of exhibited technology, leverage income and the opportunity to take elements of the Demonstrator platform to external events, where visitor numbers of 1000s per day have been engaged.

Personal contribution

George has built technology transfer capacity within the Chemical and Environmental Engineering department. Successes included the first venture capital investment into industrial microwave processing, winning the Unico (now PraxisUnico) Environmental Impact award in 2009.

The future for the Technology Demonstrator is exciting. The scope is expanding beyond engineering and multiple internal and external organisations are requesting replicate exhibits. By July 2010 the Technology Demonstrator will have been professionally overhauled by a team that normally designs new museums and showrooms which will further enhance the visitor experience. George will continue to enthuse and tell stories of invention.

George has invested significant effort in identifying opportunities to use design to accelerate and maximise potential in each series of projects. As a result of his efforts, one project has secured new VC investment which had previously suffered from difficulties in communicating the features and benefits. Novel creative brainstorming techniques have also been successfully implemented to draw in further investment to realise the wider potential of a platform heart rate sensor platform. Following this success, design is now being embedded into the wider portfolio through the Design Council *Innovate for Universities* scheme.

Key points

- Spearheaded and driven new initiatives
- Technology Demonstrator scope now building beyond engineering
- Enthusiastic promoter of innovation
- Built technology transfer capacity
- Embedding design into the wider portfolio